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ABSTRACT

"Options in Education" is a radio news program which focuses on issues and developments in education. This transcript of the show contains discussions of civil rights and school desegregation, learning to drive a school bus, and parental participation in the control of schools. Participants in this part of the program are John Merrow and Wendy Blair, moderators; Arthur Fleming, Frankie Freeman, and Peter Holmes, of the United States Civil Rights Commission; Stan Salett, of the National Committee for Citizens in Education; and reporter Connie Goldman. In addition, reporter David Freudberg interviews four people--a gym teacher, a cafeteria worker, a student, and a teacher--at the Horace Mann Middle School in Boston, where desegregation is proceeding smoothly. (JM)

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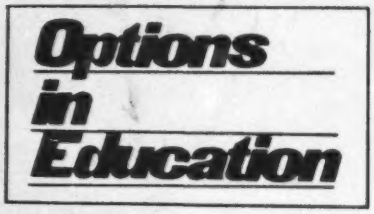

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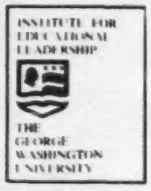
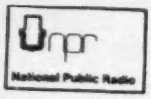
OPTIONS IN EDUCATION

November 17, 1975





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JM: John Merrow, Moderator
WB: Wendy Blair, Moderator
AF: Arthur Flemming, Chairman, of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission
FF: Frankie Freeman, U.S. Civil Rights Commission
PH: Peter Holmes, Director, U.S. Civil Rights Commission
AT: Anonymous Teacher
DF: David Freudberg, Reporter
GT: Gym Teacher
CW: Cafeteria Worker
S: Student
T: Teacher
CG: Connie Goldman, Reporter
BT: Bus Trainer
BD: Bus Driver
SS: Stan Salett, Senior Associate, National Committee for Citizens in Education

WB: I'm Wendy Blair with NPR's Options in Education

(MUSIC)

(tease "robot teacher')

WB: That's one student's version of the ideal teacher... more later and we'll talk with one of the directors of a citizens group that urges parents to reassert control of the schools. We'll also be finding out what it takes to drive a school bus. First, here's John Merrow with a report on developments in the area of school desegregation; and civil rights.

JM: Thanks, Wendy. Last week, The United States Civil Rights Commission blasted administration inforcement of Title VI, and HEW's chief enforcement officer for civil rights resigned. The Civil Rights Commission is a bipartisan agency created by the Congress in 1957 to investigate, study and report on civil rights. In a press conference last week, the Commission strongly criticized the Federal Government's enforcement of TitleVI of the civil rights act of 1964. Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in all federally-assisted programs, which together spend 50 billion dollars a year. The Commission issued an 817 page report documenting the enforcement, (and non-enforcement) actions of seven federal agencies, including the department of Health, Education and Welfare. Chairman Arthur S. Flemming feels the report makes it clear who is to blame.

AF: On balance, the report that we are issuing today makes it clear that the expectations aroused by the passage of Title VI have not been realized. The principle reason is the absence of vigorous government-wide leadership.

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JM: Flemming and the rest of the Civil Rights Commission want responsibility for coordinating and directing Title VI enforcement taken from the Justice Department and given over to the Office of Management and Budget, the old Bureau of the Budget. Vice-chairman Stephen Horn said the change would make all the government agencies shape up, because they all have to come to OMB every year to have their budgets approved. "That's where the power is," Horn said. The Civil Rights Commission says that Title VI enforcement has been characterized by a long series of missed opportunities and failures to develop affirmative programs to let minorities know their rights under Title VI.

AF: Typically, we have used the word "affirmative action", in the area of employment; but here we are concerntrating on the differences. And it is one thing to issue some regulations and then sit by and see whether or not anybody is going to file some complaints. It is another thing to affirmatively examine your programs to see whether or not members of minority groups are really on the receiving end of these services. That is the thing that stands out in my mind as a result of reading all of the evidence that has been accumulated by the staff.

JM: Flemming was asked if government bureaucrats were deliberately not enforcing Title VI.

AF: I am not getting into motivations. I am saying as a matter of fact they have missed those opportunities. I am saying that if administrators who had responsibility for the administration of these programs involving the distribution of $50 million a year have really taken seriously the fact that the Congress said under Title VI, "These services are to be delivered in such a way that there is no discrimination on the basis of race, color or national orgin, they would have thought up ways and means of getting out into the field or getting their people out into the field and identifying the fact that clearly minority groups here and there and so on were not sharing in the delivery of services to the extent that the white society was. That is the kind of a missed opportunity. Now there is running through the report instances where they identified violations and where we feel that they did not vigorously follow up those violations in order to obtain compliance. But there are not large numbers of that, simply because there wasn't an affirmative action program. But basically the failure is a failure to get out there in an effort to make sure that minority groups are really sharing in the delivery of these services that have been identified as being rendered by these seven major departments and agencies.

JM: The Civil Rights Commission also called upon the president to issue a second executive order prohibiting sex discrimination in all Federally assisted programs. Title VI does not probibit sex discrimination. I asked Chairman Flemming if he expects President Ford to accept the recommendations.

AF: That remains to be seen. We will see what he does with the recommendations.

JM: Based on what he has done in the past?

AF: No, I am sorry. We will wait and see what he does with the recommendations before we reach a conclusion. But we proceeding on the assumption that this President as well as any other President, recognizes his Constitutional responsibilities in this area, recognizes his responsibility

as Chief Executive to enforce Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and therefore would be willing to consider a recommendation from this Commission which, in our judgment, would put him in a stronger position in carrying out his Constitutional responsibilities and in carrying out the responsibilities involved in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

JM: Flemming promised a public evaluation of the President's commitment two months from now, in January, 1976. At the same press conference the Commission announced a 10-month program of nine separate activities concerning school desegregation, including white flight to the suburbs, in December; the issuance of national school desegregation guidelines, in April, and a nationwide survey of progress in desegregation, to be completed in the summer of 1976. Flemming was asked if the Civil Rights Commission was attempting to counter growing public and political opposition to busing for desegregation, and at the same time to head off support for a constitutional amendment to prohibit busing.

AF: We are not trying to head off anything. We recognize that this is a very serious issue. We recognize -- pardon me let me finish -- we recognize that it has serious implications as far as the whole civil rights movement is concerned. We feel that under the mandate that we operate under, that we have an obligation to do the kinds of things that are outlined here so as to give the public, the President, and the Congress the benefit of our conclusions based on the evidence that we will bring together. Now if it heads off something that is negative in character, fine. If it facilitates a positive approach to this and facilitates an honest-to-God necessary effort to implement the Constitutional right for desegregation, fine. I will just say personally at this point in my life I am not prepared now, certainly, to admit, but facts might force you into a different conclusion, but I am not prepared to admit that we have come to the place in this Bicentennial Year when we have to amend the Constitution in order to deprive people of rights instead of continuing to amend the Constitution in order to strengthen the rights that are guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States. And I believe that the rights are so basic, so fundamental, that we don't have to throw up our hands and admit defeat but that we have got to come to grips with the obstacles and do everything possible to remove those obstacles and maybe one way to remove some of them would be to amend the Constitution. But I can't see myself coming to the conclusion that the time has come to amend the Constitution in order to deprive some people of some rights that they have now.

JM: Arthur Flemming, chairman of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. Now nearly 20 years old, the Civil Rights Commission was created by Congress to serve, as what might be called the nation's conscience on issues involving civil rights. Although it has no enforcement power of its own, it has been a persistent and effective gadfly, if not a conscience. Last weeks announcement indicates that reports of the rumored death of the civil rights movement haven't reached the Civil Rights Commision. Several other commissioners spoke candidly about their goal of reversing what they see as a growing momentum away from school desegregation. Frankie M. Freeman feels that the country has come to a standstill, in part because many people equate <u>desegregation</u> with <u>busing</u>.

FF: I hope that this country will recognize that the "issue of busing" is fictitious, that it has been manipulated and that people have used emotions to cloud the issue, that in those communities where there is busing--and busing is only one tool for desegregation--there are many

other tools that have been used successfully by our schools that have not been recognized in the reports. I think we need to put busing in its proper perspective. That is what I meant when I said that is really not the issue because basically the people who are opposed to what they call forced busing have not ever taken a positive stand with respect to civil rights or equal opportunity in other areas anyhow. Those same people would be opposed to a black person living next-door to them. They live in all-white neighborhoods or they even live in communities that have exclusionary ordinances. So if we look at the total of American society right now, I think that the attitude is very bad or very poor with respect to all minorities, not just black people. I know that busing is one alternative. Busing is a tool and in instances in some places it may be the only tool. If it is the only tool it should be used. But it certainly should not be eliminated just because somebody doesn't like it. When I say "forced busing", it is because, you know, you are forced to pay your income taxes. Nobody says "I don't want forced taxpayers." If you don't pay your taxes you know what you do. You end up where? That is what I meant when I said the whole issue has been brought out of context and unfortunately by some people who, I think, percieve themselves to be well meaning. That is what we are trying to do by this consultation. We hope to put it into its proper perspective.

JM: What will it take to have the nation or a sizable segment of the nation stop using the terms "forced busing" and "school desegregation" interchangably?

FF: I do not know, but certainly I think this is one thing the commission is going to try to do. We are going to try through our consultations, and hopefully with the hoped for cooperation of the media and the dialog that will be involved there, to at least get people to see where the issues really are. I think that it has to be public exposure and the recognition of the public that maybe this is not really what I have been talking about. This is what I am saying, that maybe there has to be some understanding, that people have been using their prejudices and people have been playing on the fears and prejudices of people by saying that "you don't want your child to go on a bus for a half hour", when maybe in the neighborhood next door those children go on a bus for one hour every day for reasons that have nothing to do with desegregation and there is no complaint.

JM: Thank you Ms. Frankie Freeman of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare is one of the seven agencies criticized in the 817 page report issued by the Civil Rights Commission. In fact, HEW's Offfice for Civil Rights has been severely criticized over the years, by the Commission and by other groups on both sides of the desegregation issue. Last week Peter Holmes announced his resignation as Director of the Office for Civil Rights, ending a stormy two and one-half years in the top job. When we spoke by telephone, I asked him whether he has any regrets?

PH: I am concerned by the credibility of the office and the department at a whole. I think if there is a major regret it is that I, in this job, have not been able to gain wider public interest groups understanding and acceptance for the job we have been trying to do here.

JM: On the issue of credibility, a number of groups have either criticized you or damned you with faint praise. Holly Knox, for example, who's director of N. O. W.'s project on equal education rights said, "Civil rights enforcement under Holmes tenure hit a new low. But I also think you have to hold both the Secretary of H.E.W. and the President

responsible for that." Elliott Lichtman, who's an attorney who has handled a number of Civil Rights cases, has said, "There have been some dreadful decisions made in recent years." But he went on to say he wouldn't blame Holmes entirely. It is hard to tell they extent to which Holmes has been a free agent. Elliott Lichtman said that. Now Bill Taylor, who was a former staff director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and a persistent critic of O.C.R. said Civil Rights enforcement under your tenure has been terrible. How do you react to these evaluations of your stay in office?

PH: Well, there are many other reactions to my tenure in office and other people who probably complain that it was overly aggresive well, you know, on the other side of the fence. That is the nature of this job. It is very difficult to please all the people on the right or the left. I think we have done a good job. I think we have made substantial civil rights progress and we have steered a course in the interest of broadening equal opportunity in this country. So I have no regrets whatsoever despite the comments or remarks of Mr. Taylor, Mr. Lichman or Ms. Knox.

JM: Peter Holmes, the director of HEW's Office for Civil Rights, who submitted his resignation last week. On December 1, Holmes will rejoin the staff of Michigan Republican Senator Robert Griffin, one of Capitol Hill's most persistent opponents of busing for purposes of desegregation. Asked if the fact that he is going back to work for Senator Griffin doesn't support those who say that OCR under Holmes did not vigorously enforce school desegregation rulings, Holmes said that he has always favored desegregation but with an absolute minimum of busing.

(BUTTON - Brown-skinned kids)

WB: The Civil Rights Commission's program of activities on school desegregation includes a study of desegregation in Prince George's County, the country's 10th largest school district. John Merrow asked one teacher in Prince George's County to describe what happened when she was transferred from a brand new, white elementary school to an old, black elementary school three miles away. The two schools wre paired under the desegregation order, so that kindergarten thru second grade met in one school, and third-thru sixth grades met in the other school.

AT: The thing that was, the school I moved to, being a black school, was just a complete opposite change, in that we had no A.V. equipment, very limited amount of materials to be used with the children and the facilities of the school were just uncomparable to the school that we had left.

JM: You seem to be saying that three miles down the road from this spanking new and very well equipped prominently white school was an old, poorly equipped black school.

AT: Right, exactly.

JM: From where I am sitting it sounds as if I can understand pressure to integrate.

AT: Yes, it was just a complete change and nobody even realized what the facilities were just three miles down the road from the rest of us.

JM: When you say, "nobody", I think you mean nobody white.

AT: Right, definitely. I think it was known down there. When we got down there it was all black teachers down there also. So there was no white influence to bring about any kind of a change. Another thing is the teachers that

went down there were young teachers. This was most of the teachers that went, it was their first year of teaching. They were fresh out of school, who knew that these facilities and equipment were available. It was just a mater of getting it down there where the teachers that were there before maybe weren't quite aware of it.

JM: Maybe a little worn down?

AT: Yes, maybe it was a lack of interest. Teachers get into a pattern where they do the same thing year after year. If they hadn't used these things for several years it wasn't necessary for them to have them.

JM: Teachers also get tired of beating their heads against the system.

AT: True. In this particular instance it could have very well been that.

JM: Now, anonymous teacher, that was a couple of years ago. How are things working? How is desegregation proceeding those two integrated schools?

AT: Okay. Since the schools were so close, they are now what we call sister schools in that our P.T.A. works with both schools since most families are carried over into the junior school. So it is working great. Everybody is involved. We have a great amount of parent volunteers and parent involvement with both schools and everybody gets along and we can see a great deal of benefit with the children.

JM: What do you mean you see a great deal of benefit? What kinds of specific behavior do you notice, or maybe you don't notice anything abnormal.

AT: Oh yeah, the attendance is much better for one thing and the fact that the children are willing to come and anxious to come. When it is time for them to go to another school they are ready to go. They are anxious to go.

JM: You are going to give away where you are. That is the end of the interview with Anonymous Teacher. Thanks a lot. Talking with an anonymous teacher where school desegregation is working.

WB: Desegregation has not always gone so smoothly in Prince George's County, and the school board is already upset about the Civil Rights Commission's study. One board member has announced that she will try to prevent its publication, and the board's attorney calls the draft report "a total misrepresentation, total falsification, and total distortion. The report will be issued in February.

(BUTTON - What's Desegregation)

WB: School desegregation usually doesn't make the front page unless things go wrong: a knife fight, buses being stonned, or parents protesting. This dramatic press coverage leaves the good things out. Reporter David Freudberg has prepared a portrait of one desegregation school in Boston, a city which, as everyone knows, has been the scene of violent protests over busing. Boston's Horace Mann School is one of a number of so-called MAGNET schools, where extra services are provided, to serve as a magnet to attract children of different racial and ethnic background. Horace Mann a middle school, serving 236 children ages 12-14. There are an equal number of black and white students, plus one oriental and 25 hispanic children. Freudberg's report begins with his own question to the gym teacher:

DF: This is a pretty dingy building if you don't mind my saying so. I think most of the faculty and students I chatted with are in agreement on that. And I get the feeling that the kids probably are couped up in the classroom during the day. When they come to the gym, are they letting off a lot of steam and venting a lot of the frustrations?

GT: Yes, sure. I want them to do that, you know. You know, when we do our exercises, let it all out. You know, yell and jump and whatever. Then when they go out and play I tell them, go ahead, while you are playing let it all out and they do.

DF: Noisy calisthenics?

GT: Noisy calisthenics. They are doing that. They are getting that physical exercise. They are doing it, just having fun, just enjoying themselves, just letting it go and being ready to go back to school, the regular academic classes after it is over. And they are there ready. They looked forward to coming and I like it, I enjoy it. I enjoy having them. They are good kids in this school.

DF: What are the challenges to a gym teacher at a school where the kids are aged 12 to 14 and growing at awkward paces?

GT: This is the wild age, I think. The challenges are to make them learn about others and to help them grow. You don't want to force anything down their throats. You want to kind of help them along, you know. I like working in this school. It has just beem a great experience for me. I wouldn't want to teach anywhere else.

CW: Chicken. green peas, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, bread and butter, apple crisp, peaches, and chocolate pudding with topping.

DF: And what does it cost to buy a lunch here?

CW: Thirty-five cents a day per meal. The dessert is extra.

DF: You can't beat that price now.

CW: No you can't, not with the cost of food.

DF: Do you think the kids appreciate what you do here?

CW: 99.10 per cent do. (laughter)

DF: You know this is a magnet school and that Judge Garrity has ordered that the integration take place in a school like this. You get to watch from behind the counter. Do you think the kids are getting along pretty well racially?

CW: Oh, yes. These children were at LaTrotta last year where I was and that was a magnet school, too. They all got along very well.

DF: You know, time and again when I talk to kids and I say "What's your favorite subject?" they all say, "lunch."

CW: Yes, that is typical.

DF: So I guess that must be the place where they long to be most.

CW: Yes. I think most boys at this age and the girls, too, they all just look forward to it, "What's for lunch?"

DF: There is no noisier institution than a middle school cafeteria, as you will hear as I walk into one.

(BACKGROUND NOISE)

S: They should build more schools in your own neighborhood and then you wouldn't have to go way across the state just to get a good education.

DF: Now you like busing, right?

S: Yeah, you know you have fun on the bus, just go and come.

DF: I want you to tell me what positive complaints and what negative complaints you have about teachers, but don't give their names.

S: I like them. He wants you to understand your work. Sometimes he disciplines us but he does it for our own good.

DF: Can you come up with an agreement of what would be the best kind of school?

S: I think the kind where, you know, when you go home for homework or something you can have the sort of T.V. that tells us what kind of homework to do, that all you have to do is press a button for your homework sheet or something like that and there is not that much confusion about it.

S: I would get robot teachers.

DF: Why robot teachers?

S: Because human teachers, right, they yell at you and everything. Robot teachers, they explain to you. I would have push button everything. Push a button and it tells you the answer, stuff like that. Then it just comes in your head.

S: That is the whistle for everyone to be quiet.

T: Stop making those trips that you are making everyday after lunch. Don't do it anymore, understand me? You know what I am talking about, understand me? I have had reports from teachers that you are late for class.

S: I am making a book or something. That is right now, that is my project right now.

DF: How about you? What's your project?

S: Drawing pictures.

DF: About what?

S: Houses and motorcycles and stuff.

DF: And you?

S: Photography.

DF: What are you photographing?

S: My cat and the birds around my house and everything.

DF: What kind of puppets?

S: Finger puppets. I might have a puppet show.

DF: Oh, good. How about you? What are you drawing?

S: I am not drawing anything special. I am going to do what she does. I am going to smoosh it and it will come out different design on the other side.

DF: How do you spell -- smoosh it?

S: Smoosh

DF: I am playing with you. I don't think it -- maybe it is a real word. Do any of you hope to be artists? Professionally when you get out of school?

S: Me.

DF: A lot of people raised there hands.

S: I do.

T: I have found from my experience -- and I have been teaching for ten years -- that kids need a lot of choices. In other words, for me to come into an art room and say "okay everybody, we are going to paint today," there are a lot of kids that are turned off to that. They don't particularly enjoy that experience. What I feel is more important is that they get into it when they are ready to get into it, so I offer them a list of topics that they can choose from. Then they pick six. They make a contract with me that during the twelve weeks that they are here, they will complete six projects. What happens is, I also take into account that sometimes you have an "off" day and sometimes you have an "on" day and sometimes you need a day to think, to plan and organize. And I think that as an important part of art and having a feeling where there is a place in the school where you can come and enjoy yourself.

T: I don't hope to make artists in that sense. I hope to develop appreciation and also develop a feeling that when they have time on their hands it is a valuable way of spending that time.

DF: Do you think this school is pretty diverse and tolerant?

S: Yes. And the teachers don't blow their tops. They don't scream at the top of their lungs. They don't kick you out of the class. They deal with the problems here rather than dismiss them and say oh well, we don't have time to bother with them. We have guidance counselors that will come and talk to you and she will spend like a half hour just talking to you and you find out where the problem is. We have a feeling to express ourselves. The teachers don't show no favoritism to anybody like most teachers in schools. But everybody doesn't hate each other. Everybody just thinks it is another person.

DF: People don't pay much attention to race or color.

S: In this school they don't pay attention. They don't bother with that. They are just people who are people and not color. We would be studying one day about a white person or a black person at the same time. It doesn't matter.

DF: Tell me, what are the concerns of the kids at a Student Council meeting? What are they worried about and what do they bring to the attention of the legislative body of the school?

S: The kids are always saying to the leaders, they say, "oh, are we going to have chocolate milk and movies? Are we going to go on field trips? You just stand there, "yeah, as soon as we get the money, yeah, well try to go." The kids say "I want to go, I want to go."

DF: So the big problem is raising money to have these activities?

S: Yes.

DF: How do you raise any money at all?

S: Oh, make cake sales, put on plays, like have a little fair or something like that.

DF: What do you like most about the Horace Mann School and what do you like least about it?

S: Well, I like the whole school because it is good. Because they have a lot of fun. Like they have art. You have gym everyday.

DF: Do you like that?

S: Yeah, I like that. The whole school is just good. It is a pretty good school. The only thing I don't like about it is you have to do the work.

T: Why would you say that is bad when something is really nice? What would you say when something is really nice? Say you see a Jaquar or something you would really want, what would you say? Would you say that is bad?

S: No.

T: Why wouldn't you?

S: Because it doesn't give a good vocabulary.

T: So it is not a good description for you in your head?

S: When different people got like nice clothes or nice cars, they say it.

T: But what if Melanie or Harry wouldn't know that "that is bad" is?

S: It is a different neighborhood or something.

T: Differnt neighborhood. Very good. That is an interesting idea. Because she is in a different neighborhood they wouldn't know what the meaning of "that is bad".

S: I think that is a good idea, to have it mixed because then everybody get the same amount of education and the racial problem and everybody thinks one is better than the other and the other is better than them. They they keep on going on and on, until they start fights and work their way around.

DF: What is the solution to racial prejudice?

S: Have everyone come together and make up a big solution. My solution is to get everybody together and talk this thing out and then maybe they would come to an agreement.

WB: Reporter Freuberg, taking us on a tour of the Horace Mann Middle School in Boston, a magnet school where desegregation is proceeding smoothly.

(BUTTON - School Bus)

WB: Perhaps, that little girl will learn to drive a school bus one day, with or without the help of her mother. It turns out that learning to drive the school bus isn't all that easy, as we hear in this report from Connie Goldman.

CG: Could you tell me what the requirements are to become a bus driver?

BT: In Virginia it is age 21, maximum age 65.

You have to take an appropriate training period which in our case is two and a half days. At the end of two and a half days we send a person over to take the test at D.M.V., both driving and written. If they complete the test then they come back and they drive loaded under the supervision of a driver for two days and then they are free to drive.

CG: Is that the same in most states, would you say?

BT: Yes, same in most states.

CG: Does anyone ever flunk that test?

BT: Oh, yes; quite often, both the written and the driving, because the school bus is hard to negotiate, you know, in turns. So you get a person that is used to driving a car and they won't allow enough room to make a turn. In the driving test if you go across the yellow lines making a right hand turn, to your left making a right hand turn, you flunk. That is hard to do.

CG: The bus drivers I have talked to say that safety is important and their first concern, but getting along with the kids is a close second. Do you have any tests for that?

BT: No. What I try to do is when I interview somebody is ask them if they have any feelings against kids and also point out to them that kids can be very vicious in what they say and that kids will try you to see if you can take it. If the bus driver doesn't have a tough skin he better not apply.

CG: Is there anything unusual about this operation, or is it pretty much the same do you think all over the United States?

BT: Oh, it is the same. You can go anywhere and tell them that you are a supervisor of transportation. I could go from here to New Jersey or any place else, you know, same job, same way of operating.

CG: Is the pay standardized around the United States or do some bus drivers for schools elsewhere in the United States earn more money?

BT: It is not standardized. It is unionized. It is based on what the Union has done for the people.

CG: Could you tell me what the range of pay for a school bus driver is?

BT: It ranges from $3.94 to about $5.35 an hour. The driver does a high school, junior high school, and the elementary run. You know, he starts one and he gets through with the high school at 7:30 to 8:00 and he moves over to junior high at 8:05 and gets through with them at 8:30. Then he moves into the elementary and he starts picking those up at ten to nine and finishes up at 9:30. So then he is through for the morning. Then he comes back in the afternoon and repeats his processes; high school, junior high school, elementary. Then you have the drivers assigned to routes. And they you have shuttles the day like vocational type shuttles. Then you all have late runs out of the high schools and junior high schools. These are the kids who take part in music or swimming or whatever the case might be.

CG: So a bus driver is really busy all day and you know where he is because of this chart?

BT: Right. We have two types of bus drivers. One logs eight

hours a day and the other one logs six. So, he is busy.

CG: What is your first concern being a bus driver?

BD: I would say the first thing you have on your mind is being careful. That is number one. The next thing is having a nice attitude towards the public and the kids and they will come to like you. They will obey you better when you are nice to them.

CG: What do you think are some of the rewards of your job? What are some of the things that make you feel good about it?

BD: Well, it is a lot of those. It is getting along with your staff and when you can get along with the kids, that is what makes you feel good about it.

CG: What made you become a school bus driver twelve years ago?

2BD: Only because it paid more money at that time. Then again, it was easy. You get a break in between and that was what I wanted.

CG: What is easy about the job and what are some of the things that are hard?

2BD: There really aren't any things too hard about it unless it snow. Then you know, you got to go down the hill. You can't get up the hill, but you got to go down. That is the only objection I have to driving a bus.

CG: What are some of the advantages of being a school bus driver?

2BD: Soom of the many benefits that the county has to offer.

CG: What do you consider your first responsibility?

2BD: My first responsibility is knowing how to handle the bus, when to stop, be sure to stop at all the stop signs, yield right-of-way signs, stay in the proper lane at all times, make sure the signal lights are working, and once you stop and let the children off, you make sure the children are across the street before you move the bus.

CG: Do you think kids give any particular consideration to a woman bus driver?

2BD: No not at all, they don't even care.

CG: Is it a job that, if you know how to get along with kids and you know how to drive the bus you don't have problems?

BD: That is right. You have to know how to get along with the kids. I don't have no problems.

CG: So the two things you really have to know is how to drive that bus safely --

BD: How to drive and how to get along with the kids.

WB: Learning to is a regular feature on Options in Education, and every week we'll be learning to do all sorts of things, from baking bagels, etc. If there's something special you'd like to learn to do, get in touch with us, and we'll see what we can do. John?

JM: Thanks, Wendy. On our first show 2 weeks ago we posed a question for listeners, on the subject of teacher strikes. There has been a record number of strikes this fall, and there may be more, because in many districts teachers are working without contracts. Our question went like this: if negotiations, including mediation, fail to correct

unacceptable working conditions have failed to remove the bad working conditions, should teachers 1) strike, 2) do just what the contract requires and no more; or 3) accept the working conditions as they are. Here's how our listeners voted:

40% voted for the middle of the road
33% said "strike"
and 20% voted to accept working conditions as they are
the rest voted "None of the Above"

WB: Next week we'll be talking with listeners about a school problems, and if you want us to call you, you can put your name on the list by calling us and leaving your name and phone number. You'll have to make a one-minute call to us, but after that we will call you, at our expense. Calling listeners is one way we will try to keep in touch with public opinion. That is no easy job. There are a number of groups which seek to represent the public interest in schools--groups like the Institute for Responsive Education and the Public Education Association. They often have difficulty finding out how the people out there feel about schools and schooling. One such group is, the National Committee for Citizens in Education, which, despite small membership, has an impressive studies of student records, violence in schools, land and school governance. Governance--who runs the schools--is the Committee's major concern now, and John Merrow asked Stan Salett, a senior associate with NCCE, who does control the schools.

JM: Stan, who controls the public school?

SS: Well, the sum total of our answer is that no one controls the public schools.

JM: You mean they are running out of control?

SS: Just about. If we has asked the question twenty-five years ago there would have been no doubt that the answer would have been local Boards of Education. I think the situation has changed.

JM: How so?

SS: Well, the federal government is now in position to assert itself much more directly in local school affairs. Obviously, there is the growth of Teachers Unions and Teacher associations. School professionals have now organized to a much greater degree than twenty-five years ago. Parents, too, have their voice, although we feel it is much less of a voice than it was twenty-five years ago. I think the situation can be most clearly seen because anyone of a number of groups now have the power to stop public schools from functioning.

JM: Let's make it in a world of "ought to be." Who ought to control the public schools, in your judgment?

SS: Well, we think that the principle of local boards of education are fine and really should be extended. The difficulty with local boards of education is that there are too few of them covering much too wide an area. For example in Los Angeles the board of education covers an area of seven hundren square miles, 662 schools. All board members run at large. It costs about $50,000,000 to run for school board. If you are a parent, particularly a poor parent in East Los Angeles, you have very little ability to get to that school board member. That school system is too large. The school board is too large. And the principle of citizen participation is thereby much, much damaged.

In our book, "Public Testimony and Public Schools," one of our recommendations is that Parent Councils be elected at each individual school and function in some way similar to local boards of education, still under the jurisdiction of local boards of education but with some authority for staff and for school budgeting.

JM: That sounds like a P.T.A.

SS: No. P.T.A., I think you will find, does not have any say over how a school spends it budget and certainly very little say over how the staff is selected.

JM: It sounds like a powerful P.T.A., I mean you are saying "Give the parents at the school some power to hire, to make decisions about what actually goes on in that school, how the money is spent."

SS: Exactly.

JM: Is that happening anywhere?

SS: It is to some extent in the state of Florida. The state legislature passed a law that established Parent Councils at each school. As far as we can tell, it has been quite successful.

JM: Would it have to be done by a state legislature? I mean, for example, could a principal at a school set up something like that and willing give up a certain amount of power?

SS: Many school principals do, without the specified authority of the state. I am sure if this were to be considered a state-wide program the state legislature have to do it.

JM: Oh, I understand. Now you are talking in terms of getting parents, ordinary folks, more involved in the schools. I know you have set up something called the Citizen Training Institute. What are they? How do they work?

SS: The Citizen Training Institute was set up by the National Committe to bring skills and experiences to parent and citizen groups at the local level. If focuses on how to do it, in the popular phrase how to raise money, how to organize, how to be more effective in working with school administrators and school teachers, how to use the media, how to present themselves to the public. It does not focus on issues like textbooks or school busing or whatever. The purpose for the Institute followed very much our formation of the Parent's Network.

JM: What is the Parent's Network?

SS: It is really a loose coalition of local parents and citizen groups who agree to come together to exchange information, experiences and skills. We have now groups in the Parents Network from over twenty-two states and there are probably at least fifty-five or sixty-five or sixty groups in it presently.

JM: What do they get from being in this parent's Network?

SS: One of the things they get are the names of people who call us on 800 NET-WORK.

JM: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. You lost me on that. 800-NET-WORK?

SS: Yes. I think you will find the word network appearing and reappearing in our description of our activities. 800-NET-WORK is a national toll-free telephone line, 800-NET-WORK.

JM: What happens if I call that?

SS: First of all anybody can call us, not just you, anybody, any citizen, any parent anywhere in the country can call us toll-free. By calling the number, they will get a message and some information about the National Committee and how they can help children in school. They will also have an opportunity to leave their name and by direct mail receive a great deal more information about us. Among the information that they will receive is a copy of "Network", which is our newspaper, a school year newspaper for parents. If they are a group or an organization, they will be invited to join the Parents Network. Through the Parents Network they might be invited to participate in the Citizen Training Institute.

JM: I see. It is not as complicated as it sounds. The simple thing is to call that 800 number. What was the number again?

SS: 800-NET-WORK.

JM: The National Committee, Stan, what kind of positions do you take?

SS: The National Committee doesn't take positions as other national organizations like National Organization of School Boards or National School Administrators Associations. We don't see ourselves in the same way as a national group representing citizens and parents before Congress or before the general public. We do have positions on issues which we will be glad to talk about. But our major focus rather than focusing in on Washington is really to focus out in the country, trying to have local parents and citizen groups.

JM: What position have you taken on the issue of school busing for purposes of desegregation?

SS: We have taken no public issue. Our--

JM: Are you about to?

SS: Pardon?

JM: Are you about to? If you are not going to be private anymore?

SS: If anybody asks us, we support busing as one alternative to school integration. We find, however, that of the parents that call us and ask us for information, very little of that information is requested on school integration or school busing. I would say a very small percentage, certainly less than two per cent, requested information on school desegregation or school integration. This led to our feeling that while school busing or school integration is certainly a key issue in communities where it occurs, it is not a great issue in a great majority of the school systems around the country.

JM: What are the great issues, Stan? I mean you do have that contact, that direct contact, with a number of people around the country. What is really bothering people about their schools?

SS: The number one issue seems to be information. Parents and other citizens don't feel that they are getting the right kind of information from their school system. They don't know what schools are doing. They don't understand their policies. And many parents find out to their horror that certain programs are occuring largely through their own children and by then it is too late for them to many any difference in the policies about that program.

JM: So they feel left out?

SS: Decidedly left out.

JM: Is there a number two issue?

SS: I don't think we have seen it yet. The number two issue changes with the times. I think we all might agree that education is subject to fashion, fashionable programs and fashionable problems. I think a year ago a very important issue, at least for us and for the parents who were involved with us, was the issue of privacy of student records. Now that seems to be somewhat minimized particularly with the passage of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. More recently the issue seems to be violence in the schools.

JM: Has that gone away?

SS: No. But it doesn't seem to be -- at least I can't see a third issue yet on the horizon. But I wouldn't be surprised if violence in the schools was not the key issue in American education next fall. Although certainly the problem of violence in the schools will be with us for some time to come, as the issue of privacy will be with us as will several other issues.

JM: When you say, "violence," does that take in the notion of school discipline?

SS: Yes it does.

JM: So that is kind of a umbrella issue. I suspect that is probably an important issue, too. What about the question of textbooks, what is in the textbooks and who chooses them? Is that a hot issue now? In you judgment?

SS: It is, but in our analysis the textbook issue is part of a broader issue of "What's happening to my child in schoool and what's the curriculum and what's in it and how was it decided, and do I approve of it and if I disapprove, what are my rights as a parent?"

JM: So that is an information kind of question, too. They all seem, from where you are sitting anyway, the hot issue seems to come back to that question of access to information about what is going on in the schools. Parents perhaps just don't want to keep on finding out their kids. They don't want to be the last to know. Now as more people call 800-NET-WORK and tell you what is going on, I hope you will tell us and we will tell them again. Stan Salett of the National Committee for Citizens in Education.

WB: We hope you will call us too, and accept our invitation to be on next week's Options in Education" I'll give the number, call us and leave your name and number, and we will call you later on. Here's the number: area code 202-785-6464.

JM: Call now, and if the line is busy, please try again. 202-785-6464. We have one of those automatic recording machines, and last week--on its first day--it proved the superiority of people over machines. It took five calls, then broke down. We didn't discover it for a while, so if you tried last week and go only an infernal hum, try again. 202-785-6464. We are also making transcripts of the series available to listeners, to educators and to education decision makers. We omit the weekly news from the transcript and in its place we put a short list of books, articles, places and people with more information on the topics we covered on that program. Frankly, we hope a lot of listeners will do what one friend in Iowa does. She gets a transcript and sees that it goes to members of the local board of education. Transcripts cost 50 cents, from Options in Education, 2025 M (as in markeyplace) Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

WB: Cassettes are available also, at four dollars apiece. The address again: Options in Education, 2025 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

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WB: I'm Wendy Blair, join us next week for Options in Education.

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